

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
CDRDARCOM ALEX VA
USAMSAA APG MD
SRUSASGUK LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 1639

SEC DEF FOR ODDR&E, OASD(ISA). BONN AND LONDON FOR DAOS.
DARCOM FOR DRCIRD. PICATINNY FOR ASST PROJ MGR FOR XM1 TANK
USAMSAA FOR DRXS-DS.

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCON, NATO, MILI
SUBJECT: UK-FRG MAIN BATTLE TANK PROGRAM

ON 22 MARCH 1977 THE UK AND FRG OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED NATO
OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE SUBJECT PROGRAM. TEXT OF THE
NOTIFICATION FOLLOWS. BEGIN TEXT:

22 MAR, 1977
DR W B LABERGE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR
DEFENCE SUPPORT
OTAN/NATO

DEAR DR LABERGE
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MAIN BATTLE TANKS

1. THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY WISH TO
INFORM NATO OFFICIALLY OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE ANGLO-GERMAN
STUDIES ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A FUTURE MAIN BATTLE TANK
(FMBT), AND HAVE INSTRUCTED US TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO YOU AND ALL
THE NADREPS THE ATTACHED STATEMENT OF THE POSITION. THE BRI-
TISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE WILL BE MAKING AN ANNOUNCE-
MENT ABOUT THE JOINT DECISION DURING THE DEFENCE DEBATE TAKING
PLACE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TODAY.

2. THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY REMAIN FULLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE THAT WE SHOULD ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DEGREE OF INTEROPERABILITY AND STANDARDISATION BETWEEN OUR, AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES, RESPECTIVE BATTLE TANKS, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS FUEL AND AMMUNITION. WE WILL BE GIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THESE QUESTIONS DURING CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE RELUCTANTLY DECIDED THAT NO COLLABORATIVE PROJECT IS POSSIBLE AT THIS JUNCTURE.

YOURS SINCERELY,

(PFIEFFER) (W A PERRY)

NADREP NADREP

GERMAN DELEGATION TO NATO UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION
TO NATO

CC:

ALL NADREPS

STATEMENT TO NATO BY THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY
FMBT/KPZ3

1. AT NATO MEETINGS THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY HAVE MADE STATEMENTS ON THE PORGRESS OF A JOINT MAIN BATTLE TANK PROGRAMME INITIATED IN 1972 BY THE SIGNATURE ON A JOINT GENERAL CONFIDENTIAL

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STAFF TARGET (GST). THE AIM OF THE CONCEPT STUDIES WHICH FOLLOWED WAS TO SEEK AGREEMENT UPON THE MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF A COMMON TANK TO BE INTRODUCE IN ABOUT 1985. THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY NOW WISH TO OFFER A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE OUTCOME OF THESE STUDIES.

2. INITIALLY THE JOINT WORK MADE GOOD PROGRESS BUT IT BECAME APPARENT TOUTS THAT 1985 WOULD BE AN UNREALISTIC DATE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW TANK. OWING TO A NUMBER OF UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS, ALL OF WHICH INTRODUCED A DELAY INTO OUR JOINT PROGRAMME, WE AGREED TO A FIRST PRODUCTION DATE OF 1989 AS OUR ULTIMATE GOAL. WE RECOGNISED THAT IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY CRUCIAL FOR THE UK TO MAINTAIN THE NEW DATE OF 1989 SINCE THE CHIEFTAIN TANK HAS ALREADY BEEN IN SERVICE FOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS AND WILL BE RAPIDLY APPROACHING THE END OF ITS LIFE BY THEAT TIME.

3. THE JOING PROGRAMME CONTINUED SUCCESSFULLY ON THIS BASIS UNTIL OTHER COMPLICATIONS AROSE. THESE INCLUDED THE RESULT OF THE TRILATERAL GUN EVALUATION UNDERTAKNE BY THE UNITED STATES/UNITED KINGDOM/GERMANY WHICH DID NOT LEAD TO THE DESIRED AGREEMENT ON AJOINT GUN AND AMMUNITION FOR NATO TANKS. IN CONSEQUENCE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DEVISE A SUITABLE WORK SHARING SCHEME. FURTHERMORE GERMANY HAS SINCE CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE US AIMED AT HARMONISING MAJOR COMPONENTS

OF LEOPARD 2 AND XM1. COMPONENTS ADOPTED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT MAY HAVE AN EFFECT ON A UK/GERMAN TANK ENTERING PRODUCTION SOME TEN YEARS LATER. IN THIS RESPECT, THE IMPORTANT RECENT DECISION BY THE US TO ADOPT A GAS TURBINE ENGINE FOR XM1 HAS MADE STILL MORE DIFFICULT THE PROSPECT OF ACHIEVING A WORK SHARING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE UK AND GERMANY.

4. NEVERTHELESS, AT AN ANGLO-GERMAN SYMPOSIUM IN LONDON IN OCTOBER 1976 THE MAJOR FEATURES OF A MAIN BATTLE TANK WERE AGREED BY BOTH SIDES. IN BRIEF, THIS WAS A CONVENTIONAL TURRETED TANK OF ABOUT 55 TONNES WITH A FOUR MAN CREW, ALL ROUND
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TRAVERSE AND A MINIMUM OF 1500 HORSEPOWER FOR THE ENGINE. ALTHOUGH THE CALIBRE OF THE MAIN ARMAMENT WAS AGREED AT 120MM THE TYPE OF GUN REMAINED UNRESOLVED. THUS, HAD OTHER FACTORS NOT PREVENTED US FROM SO DOING, THE UK AND GERMANY COULD HAVE COMMENCED THE JOINT DRAFTING OF A GENERAL STAFF REQUIREMENT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USNATO 1639

SEC DEF FOR ODDR&E, OASD(ISA). BONN AND LONDON FOR DAOS.
DARCOM FOR DRCIRD. PICATINNY FOR ASST PROJ MGR FOR XM1 TANK
USAMSAA FOR DRXSY-DS.

5. IT WAS AGREED AT THE LONDON SYMPOSIUM THAT, FOR THE UK/GERMAN PROGRAMME TO PROCEED TO SCHEDULE, IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR AN INTEGRATED TEAM TO BEGIN WORK IN THE AUTUMN OF THIS YEAR, BUT THAT THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY IF WORK SHARING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPONENTS COULD HAVE BEEN SETTLED BY THIS TIME. FOR THE REASONS WHICH HAVE BEEN STATED THE PROGRAMME COULD NOT BE ADHERED TO AND TH PRODUCTION DATE OF A COMMON

TANK WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO BE DELAYED. THE UNITED KINGDOM COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS POSITION. MOREOVER, ON THE BASIS OF A COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS COMPARISON, GERMANY CONCLUDED THAT THE FMBT CONCEPTS SELECTED FOR STUDY DID NOT SHOW ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OVER LEOPARD 2 AND THEREFORE DID NOT CONSIDER THE EFFORT AND COSTS INVOLVED IN THE CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAMME TO BE WARRANTED.

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6. RECOGNISING THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT PRODUCTION OF A JOINT TANK WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE IN THE 1980S AND HAVE THEREFORE AGREED TO TERMINATE THE PROGRAMME.

BOTH NATIONS WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE UNDOUBTED ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE JOINT STUDIES, WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN THE FRUITFUL EXCHANGE OF A GREAT VOLUME OF DETAILED AND WELL DOCUMENTED INFORMATION. BOTH SIDES ARE NOW ABLE TO DRAW ON THIS EXPERIENCE TO THE BENEFIT OF THE CONTINUING GERMAN PROGRAMME FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF LEOPARD 2, AND IN DETERMINING THE NEW UNITED KINGDOM PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE A REPLACEMENT FOR CHIEFTAIN ON SCHEDULE.

7. IT IS THE INTENTION OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO MAINTAIN CLOSE RELATIONS AND TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF FUTURE COLLABORATION IN THE TANK FIELD. OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN DISCUSSIONS TO THIS END USING THE EXCELLENT CONTACTS WHICH HAVE NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED.

END TEXT
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